

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-13 DPW-01 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 IGA-02 EB-11 AGR-20 OMB-01 NIC-01

EUR-25 RSR-01 /178 W

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R 240932Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6383

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 15337

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, VS

SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEETING OF MR 3 COMMANDERS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON CAN THO DANANG NHA TRANG USDAO  
SAIGON AUGUST 24 REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE BIEN HOA 0436

SUMMARY: LTG NGUYEN VAN MINH, MR3 CG, LAID IT ON THE LINE TO HIS  
PRINCIPAL SUBORDINATES IN SPECIAL MEETING ON AUGUST 21. HE  
MINCED NO WORDS IN TELLING THEM THAT HE CONSIDERS NEXT FOUR MONTHS  
CRUCIAL AND THAT THEY WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR FAILING TO  
PROTECT PEOPLE AND GVN INSTITUTIONS FROM COMMUNIST ENCROACHMENT.  
MINH MADE IT CLEAR THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT COMMUNIST  
CHARGES THAT GVN VIOLATED PEACE ACCORDS. IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER  
THAT GVN HAS RIGHT TO DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO PROTECT FLOW OF  
RICE SO THAT COMMUNISTS WILL BE DENIED MUCH-NEEDED FOOD; ENSURE  
PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO CAST BALLOTS IN UPCOMING UPPER HOUSE ELECTION  
FREE OF COMMUNIST INTERFERENCE; AND PROTECT THAT WHICH IS CURRENTLY  
UNDER ITS CONTROL. MINH IMploRED HIS SUBORDINATES TO GET OUT  
MOREIN THE HAMLETS, MIX WITH THE PEOPLE, AND SHOW THEM THAT THE  
GCN CARES ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM. HE HAD SPECIAL WORDS  
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FOR HIS ARVN COMMANDERS. MORALE OFTROOPS, HE SAID, IS WHAT

WILL MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VICTORY AND DEFEAT. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT SOLDIERS BE TREATED FAIRLY AND RECEIVE RICE ALLOTMENTS, NOT ONLY ON TIME BUT EXACT AMOUNTS TO WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED. HE REMINDED HIS CHARGES THAT THE COMMUNISTS ARE A FORMIDABLE FOE, WILY AND DETERMINED. THERE IS AN EVER PRESSING NEED TO STAY ON THE ALERT, MORE SO NOW THAT THE U.S. HAS STOPPED THE BOMBING IN CAMBODIA. WE MUST PROTECT OUR BORDERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE AREAS WHICH ABUT CAMBODIA IN LONG AN, HAUONGHIA AND TAY NINH PROVINCES. END SUMMARY.

1. MR3 CG LTG NGUYEN VAN MINH, IN A SPECIAL MEETING AUTUST 21 AT HIS HEADQUARTERS IN BIEN HOA, OUTLINED TO ASSEMBLED PROVINCE CHIEFS, ARVN DIVISION COMMANDERS AND AN ARRAY OF LESSER LIGHTS PRECISELY WHAT HE EXPECTED OF THEM IN THE NEXT FOUR MONTHS. HE DWELLED ON THE PROTECTION AND CONTROL OF RICE, ENSURING THE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO VOTE FREE OF COMMUNIST INTERFERENCE, PROTECTING THOSE AREAS UNDER GVN CONTROL FROM COMMUNIST ENCROACHMENT, AND BLOCKING ANY ATTEMPTS THE COMMUNISTS MIGHT CHOOSE TO MAKETO MOVE MATERIEL AND MEM INTO MR3 FROM CAMBODIA NOW THAT THE U.S. HAS HALTED THE BOMBING.
  2. RICE CONTROL: LTG MINH PLACED UTMOST IMPORTANCE ON DENYING RICE TO THE ENEMY. THE VC, HE SAID, NEED RICE TO FEED THEIR ESTIMATED 75,000 TROOPS IN THE NEAR MR 3 AND FOR THEIR INDUCEMENT PROGRAM IN WHICH THEY BUY RICE AND OTHER FOODSTUFFS AT ALMOST TWICE THE MARKET PRICE AND RESELL IT TO THE PEOPLE AT THAN THE MARKET PRICE.# IN THIS CONNECTION, PROVINCE CHIEFS WERE ORDERED TO STOP ALL SELLING TO THE ENEMEY IN THEIR AREAS AND TO STOP ALL BUT ESSENTIAL MOVEMENT OF RICE BETWEEN PROVINCES AND FROM REGION IV TO REGIONIII. ACCORDING TO MINH, OBTAINING ACCURATE FIGURES ON RICE PRODUCTIONS LOOMS AS A THREAT TO THE RICE CONTROL EFFORT.
  3. MINH BELIEVES THAT IF RICE IS SUCCESSFULLY DENIED TO THE VC DURING NEXT FOUR MONTHS, THEN A LARGE SCALE RICE WAR WILL ENSUE IN JANUARY DURING THE HARVEST. HE SAID THIS NEW PHASE OF FIGHTING WILL BE EVEN MORE CRUCIAL THAN PRECEEDING FOUR MONTHS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GVN. FAILURE TO KEEP THE HARVEST UNDER GVN CONTROL COULD SEND FOOD PRICES IN SVN SOARING EVEN HIGHER AND PROVIDE FOOD FOR COMMUNISTS FOR MUCH OF THE NEXT YEAR.
  4. UPPER HOUSE ELECTION: MINH TOLD HIS SUBORDINATES THAT VC EFFORTS TO DISRUPT THE ELECTION IN MR3 MAY INVOLVE CONFISCATION OF VOTING CARDS, MINING AND SHELLING OF ROADS AND POLLING PLACES, STEALING BALLOT BOXES, AND KIDNAPPING NEWLY ELECTED SENATORS.
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HE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF A SUCCESSFUL ELECTION FOR THE GVN, BOTH INTERNALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, AND PASSED ON INSTRUCTIONS HE SAID WERE FROM SAIGON TO OBTAIN A 100 PCNT VOTER TURNOUT IN MR3. MINH REVEALED A REGION-WIDE SECURITY PLAN TO THWART COMMUNIST ATTEMPTS TO DISRUPT THE ELECTION. THE PLAN IS NOW GOING INTO EFFECT AND WILL UTILIZE ALL TROOPS IN MR3. THE ARVN WILL PROVIDE THE OUTER PERIMETER SECURITY WHILE RF, PF, NP, AND PSDF PROTECT THE HAMLETS AND SECURE THE POLLING PLACES.

5. ENEMY INTENTIONS: LTG MINH REPORTED THERE ARE ABOUT 75,000 COMMUNIST TROOPS IN MR3 BUT HE DISCOUNTS THE POSSIBILITY OF LARGE-SCALE ATTACKS IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS. ENEMY TROOPS, HE SAID, WILL ENGAGE IN PROPAGANDA, HARASSMENT, ROAD CUTTING, AND MINOR ATTACKS DESIGNED TO CREATE ECONOMIC CHAOS, UNDERMINE GVN MORALE, AND DISRUPT THE SENATE ELECTIONS.

6. MINH MADE IT CLEAR THAT COMMANDERS SHOULD NOT GET OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN CARRYING OUT THEIR DUTIES. HE TOLD THEM THAT GVN HAD A PERFECT RIGHT TO PREVENT THE ENEMY FROM DISRUPTING ORDERLY UNDERTAKINGS OF THE GVN AND THAT IT COULD, UNDER THE PARIS AGREEMENT, PROTECT THAT WHICH IS UNDER ITS CONTROL.

7. CHARGE TO HIS COMMANDERS: MINH CLOSED THE MEETING BY CHARGING HIS SUBORDINATES TO KEEP CLOSELY IN TOUCH WITH BOTH THE COMMON PEOPLE IN THEIR AREAS AND WITH THEIR TROOPS. HE ORDERED PROVINCE CHIEFS TO GET OUT IN HAMLETS AND MIX WITH THE PEOPLE TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY ARE THINKING AND TO SHOW THEM THAT GVN CARES ABOUT THEM. HE INSTRUCTED HIS ARVN COMMANDERS TO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO MORALE OF TROOPS. POOR MARALE COULD EASILY MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VICTORY AND DEFEAT. ALL TROOPS MUST BE FAIRLY TREATED AND FULL RICE ALLOWANCES MUST ALWAYS BE ISSURED ON TIME. HE THEN REMINDED THOSE AT THE MEETING THAT THE COMMUNISTS ARE A DANGEROUS AND DETERMINED FOE AND THAT THEY MUST BE EVER ON THE ALERT TO PREVENT EROSION OF THE GVN POSITION. NOW THAT THE US HAS STOPPED THE BOMBING OF CAMBODIA, THE GVN IS ON ITS OWN MORE THAN EVER, AND SPECIAL ATTENTION MUST NOW BE PAID TO THE BORDER REGION PROVINCES OF LONG AN, HAU NGHIA, AND TAY NINH. SIGNED WALKINSHAW UNQUOTE MARTIN

NOTE BY OC/T: #SENTENCE AS RECEIVED. WILL BE SERVICED UPON REQUEST.

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